

12.15  
1935

JUL 19 1936

# DRAMA

A MONTHLY RECORD OF THE THEATRE  
IN TOWN AND COUNTRY  
AT HOME & ABROAD



## CONTENTS

JULY—SEPTEMBER, MCMXXXIX

PLAYS OF THE MONTH: BY  
W. A. DARLINGTON / THE  
PLAYS OF JEAN-JACQUES  
BERNARD / WHAT ARE THE  
AMATEURS DOING? / HOW  
TO PROMPT / ILLUSTRATIONS

6d.

*Published by*  
THE BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE  
9 FITZROY SQUARE  
LONDON  
W.1

## Irene Mawer

### Summer School of Mime and Drama

Portman Rooms,  
Baker Street, W.1

August 3rd to 9th

For full particulars and fees apply to:—

The Secretary,  
The Ginner-Mawer School,  
Philbeach Hall, Philbeach Gardens, S.W.3. Fro: 2767

### MISS WEBBER'S TYPEWRITING OFFICE

PLAYS, PARTS, AUTHORS' MSS., ETC.  
VISITING SECRETARIES  
DUPLICATING

6, Suffolk Street, Pall Mall, London, S.W.1.  
Telephone : Whitehall 8324.

### Millicent Fawcett Hall

46, TUFTON ST., WESTMINSTER, S.W.1.

Dramatic Performances : Conferences  
Social and Business Meetings : Dances  
Accommodation 200

LARGE STAGE—GOOD LIGHTING  
EXCELLENT DRESSING ROOMS

Refreshments obtainable in Restaurant

Apply for terms to: The AGENT,  
Women's Service Trust,  
29, Marsham Street, S.W.1

Tel.: ABBEY 1941

### ST. PANCRAS PEOPLE'S THEATRE

Charrington Street, Crowndale Road, N.W.1

TEL.: EUSTON 1769

Under the Direction of  
Producer and Manager

EDITH NEVILLE, O.B.E.  
PHYLLIS KINDERSLEY

### JULY PERFORMANCES, 1939

Evenings at 8.30 p.m.

6th, 7th and 8th

The Composite Man — — Ronald Yeats

Reserved Seats: Numbered, 2/6. Unnumbered, 1/6.  
Admission 7d.

Transferable Ticket for the same seat for the ten plays,  
2/6 seat 15/-, 1/6 seat 12/6, 7d. seat 5/-.

Full Time Students' Course, including classes in Acting,  
Stage Department, Make-up, etc.

Vacancies for men and women of experience  
and ability for Amateur Repertory Company.

Send stamp for prospectus to:  
The Business Manager, St. Pancras People's Theatre,  
Ltd., at the above address. Interviews by appointment.

### FASHION AND FORM

A Lecture Demonstration

VALERIE PRENTIS

ENID BARR

RICHARD SOUTHERN

present the subject

Clothes and the Player

from an Unusual Angle

Apply to:

Valerie Prentis, 10, Chesham St., N.W.2  
Primrose 445

### KING'S STONE PRESS

20a, Lower Teddington Road  
Kingston-on-Thames

1/6 EACH

"The Golden Who Kapt Her Head," by Winifred Carter.  
"A fine Historical Play. Belief Playgoers will remember its  
thrilled packed houses."

"Doctor Johnson's Mrs. Thrale" by the same Author. "This  
is a first rate play which is to be recommended."—Theatrecraft.

"Lass O' Lougher." The Queen's Theatre Society.

"Wanted A Wife" and "The Two Mrs. Camerons."  
Both Great Favourites.

HELPFUL TERMS FOR SMALL SOCIETIES

Please mention "Drama" when replying to Advertisements.



V  
=  
=  
=

I  
th  
m  
an  
I

o  
p  
th  
fo  
fi  
p  
C

P  
M  
to  
n  
ti  
n  
A  
th  
a  
fi  
a  
s  
s

F  
n  
F  
n  
v  
f  
v  
l  
n



# DRAMA

VOL 17

JULY-SEPTEMBER, MCMXXXIX

NUMBER 10

---

THE JOURNAL OF THE BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE

---

## PLAYS OF THE MONTH

By W. A. Darlington

I SEE that my predecessor in this place, Mr. A. E. Wilson, counted himself lucky that he had two plays to write about in one month which were of worth and intelligence, and directed to the adult mind. In that case I am luckier still, for I have three.

It is true that one of the three had been tried out before, one was a failure, and one was produced outside London. Never mind, I have three, just as the tiresome little child in the form was one of seven; and I shall resist fiercely any attempt on the Editor's part to play the part of Wordsworth to my Cottage Girl, and argue with me.

First of the three, and easily the most important, was John Steinbeck's "Of Mice and Men" at the Apollo. This play was moved to the West End from the Gate Theatre, and no doubt was spoken of in "Drama" at the time of its first production. However, I missed it then, and came fresh to it at the Apollo, and it gave me such a memorable thrill that I am delighted to have a chance of saying again how fine I think it. Since I wrote the first-night notice I have been told that this is a stage adaptation of a novel. Mr. Steinbeck's skill in translating from one medium to another seems to me quite uncanny.

His feat is to have made a poetically moving play out of inarticulate characters. In the novel this is not hard, for he can describe people and things; in the play the people must speak for themselves, and have no words. Yet the quality of the protecting friendship of a little tramp for his huge, half-witted mate is conveyed with certainty and leaves an impression of clear beauty on the mind. The play inspires John Mills, Niall

MacGinnis and Claire Luce to give their best, and to make the whole evening an uplifting experience.

My second play is "Rhondda Roundabout" at the Globe. As I write these lines, its fate is in the balance, and I hope that by the time you read my description of this play as "a failure," the word will have been proved wrong. It fails—if fail it must—not as a piece of writing but as narrative. Audiences like a good story above all things; and Jack Jones, as a storyteller, is in this instance all over the place.

He invents characters, gets you interested in them, drops them and lets you forget them, picks them up again and expects you to raise a new fire from cold ashes, and generally refuses to give the poor playgoer half a chance. But he pours a sense of life and an understanding of character into almost every line that he writes, brings the sufferings and the courage of the Rhondda Valley vividly before you, and justifies exactly the comment made to me by one of my colleagues when I met him next day—"What a *good* bad play that was last night!"

My third play is Dorothy M. Sayers's contribution to this year's Canterbury Cathedral Festival, "The Devil to Pay." It is a new version of Marlowe's "Doctor Faustus," so far as the story goes. The philosophy, however, is Miss Sayers's own. Faustus, together with the gift of youth, gets a pre-Adamite innocence and loses the knowledge of good and evil. Consequently, when his soul has to be handed over to the Devil it has shrunk to the likeness of a small black dog. The Devil protests, but gets no satisfaction from a celestial Judge who arrives to settle the case.

## PLAYS OF THE MONTH

Faustus gets the choice between an eternity of blank ignorance and a purgation age of painful knowledge. Either he must go for ever into a limbo outside all consciousness, or he must descend into Hell and begin anew from there the search for God. Miss Sayers has a fine mind and thinks nobly of the soul—which makes that tiresome paragon Lord Peter Wimsey rather hard to account for.

Among the less important plays of the month the most deserving was Adrian Brunel's "Only Yesterday." This set out to show the foolishness and wickedness of war by tracing the adventures of a family in the last one. In its way it was quite admirable; but it said in a whisper what recently has been shouted from the house-tops. Its public had to be sought among those rare people who can listen to a still small voice in Bedlam.

"Behold the Bride," at the Shaftesbury, had neither worth nor intelligence, nor was it directed to the adult mind. It was simply a frame to hold Luise Rainer, an actress who had shown in such films as "The Good Earth" that she has unusual quality. She is certainly a brilliant player, but I am still wondering at her choice of vehicle.

Another big-scale production of the month "Sixth Floor" at the St. James's, was an instant failure. The chief revival of the month was "Pygmalion," fresh from its extraordinary triumph as a film-play and with Margaret Rawlings as Eliza. And the visit of Maurice Schwartz and his Yiddish company from New York to the Garrick showed us once more that it is not necessary to understand a play in order to admire the skill with which it is acted.

## THE PLAYS OF JEAN-JACQUES BERNARD

By J. Leslie Frith

JEAN-JACQUES BERNARD'S "The Springtime of Others" was the last production of a brilliantly successful season that closed at the Gate last month. In 1926, at the Everyman, Hampstead, it was the first of Bernard's plays to be produced in England. This first contact of a playwright with a foreign public is always rather a ticklish business. But on that first night at Hampstead the result was never for a moment in doubt.

In thirteen years, however, the reputation of a play or of a playwright is as easily marred as maintained. Bernard, happy in a quality that, like good leather, lasts, has increased his English reputation with the years. Of the recent production at the Gate, Mr. Charles Morgan wrote: "Monsieur Bernard's 'Le Printemps des Autres,' a study of a woman's tormented and unexpressed love for her daughter's husband, is an acknowledged masterpiece, and criticism has now chiefly to record its undiminished vitality. As a contrast with the modern commercial method of shouting and over-emphasis in the theatre, it is an unspeakable relief."

M. Bernard's plays are genuinely theatrical. They wait upon that fusion of the spirit of

audience and actors that is a mutual act of creation, and is the miracle and glory of the theatre. It is only in performance that a play can be fully judged. Performance, indeed, is the test that only the fit survive. The theatre is a difficult medium, and high mastery in it rare. A bogus play, whatever its literary grace, or even its imaginative force and beauty, withers on the stage. Five minutes in the glare of the footlights blow it skyhigh, or would, if the footlights could express themselves explosively.

But there is, also, a danger that plays written with style and fastidious taste can be so satisfying in the reading that their dramatic quality becomes obscured. It is not a paradox to say that a play can read too well. Apparently, a well-written play can be enjoyed as "literature" and the fact that it was written to be played forgotten. In this way, the better a play is written the more easily is it removed in the reader's mind from the theatrical circumstances that are the only justification of its form. This is not an imaginary danger. It was, I think, Mr. Granville-Barker who said that the reading of a play is an expert job; that to visualise it on the stage from a reading needs

## THE PLAYS OF JEAN-JACQUES BERNARD

practical knowledge of the theatre. And it is true, of course. Happily, the reading of plays, especially by amateurs, has increased so enormously in recent years that there does now exist a large body of much more expert play readers. Yet, although the danger has become less, it is still worth while to note it, particularly with a writer of Bernard's special quality.

It is natural that much should have been written of the "delicacy" of Bernard's art. There is more than enough imagination, sensibility, and civilised mind in every one of his plays. Lacking these qualities they would be nothing. But they are also written by a craftsman with an almost uncanny instinct for theatrical effect. Beneath the charm, the delicacy and grace of all Bernard's writing there is a rare theatreworthiness. He is, first and foremost, a dramatist, with a born and disciplined sense of the theatre. Few would deny the subtlety, the imagination, the sensitive feeling, of "The Unquiet Spirit," for instance, yet it would be a very good melodrama indeed that could beat it for sheer theatrical effectiveness.

A playwright's technical method is a matter for the delight, or otherwise, of the expert. It is certainly not the concern of the spectator, who, while he enjoys the effects it produces, need be no further aware of it. It is not even really the concern of the actor, whose work is made so much easier by it. To them both, it is what the author has to say that matters. However skilful it may be, unless it arouses the sympathy of an audience, no play can live on the stage. Bernard's unceasing preoccupation is with the thoughts, feelings, emotions, with all that, for want of a better word, we call the hearts of his characters. These quietly told stories are about real people; people with whom, when the play is ended, we have lived so intimately for a vivid hour or two that we seem to have known them all their lives. The plays are warm with human emotion, however reticent may be the expression of it. And they have very endearing qualities. When they laugh, they laugh delightfully. When they weep, it is with true feeling.

All the plays have a quality in common: they "play" extraordinarily well. They are written not only with a very exact knowledge of the limitations of the stage but with something that is far more important, an imaginative

knowledge of the possibilities of acting. Of *Martine* it has been said that she invariably makes reputations. The good parts that make good actors are nearly always written by good playwrights. A comedian amused at his own jokes rarely makes an audience laugh. A tragedian overwhelmed by his own emotion just as surely has his spectators unmoved. And the playwright, wrapt in his dream, but forgetting the unescapable necessity of writing something that can be acted, is likely to be similarly disappointed. I do not mean that Bernard's characters are always easy to act. Some of them are extremely difficult. Bernard does, indeed, often tax producer and actors to the utmost. But he is as richly rewarding.

Six of his plays have now been translated into English and played in London. Ever since the production here of "The Springtime of Others" he has been recognised by English critical opinion as a dramatist of real importance. Such a verdict was to be expected. He combines great technical skill with rare qualities of imagination and feeling and the utmost delicacy and subtlety of treatment. It is a combination that is fairly unusual in the theatre. We seem more often to have either strong plays, or else plays of charm, of sentiment, of pleasant fancy: a drama of sensibility or of shock. But plays that unite acute sensibility with a very clear outline and a steel-like sharpness of attack are exceptional. I always think that a Bernard play is very like a skilful and perfectly trained boxer. It has the same lean athletic muscularity, without an ounce of superfluous flesh, and the blows it strikes are as exquisitely timed.

In Paris, three of Bernard's plays are in the repertory of the Comédie Française. "Martine," with which English playgoers are very familiar, "The Sulky Fire," and "Les Soeurs Guédonec." His reputation is European.

The English translations of five plays by Jean-Jacques Bernard are to be published early in September in a collected volume. The five plays in the book will be "Martine," "The Springtime of Others," "The Unquiet Spirit," "Invitation to a Voyage," and "The Sulky Fire."

---

### ASHRIDGE, HERTS

Between August 26th and September 8th there will be a course on the "Use of Leisure and Community Life," during which Community Drama, Village Institutes and the problems of Community Centres will be dealt with. Particulars may be obtained from the Secretary, Mr. Henry Gordon, free on application.

# WHAT ARE THE AMATEURS DOING?

By E. S. Darmady

THE inquiry, of which this article gives an account, was undertaken, to answer in some degree the question "What is the Great Amateur Movement doing?" It is astonishing, considering how widespread is the interest in amateur drama, that those who take part in it, should know so little about each other's work. It is not even known how many Dramatic Societies there are. Some 2,500 are affiliated to the British Drama League, but it has been estimated, on what grounds it is difficult to discover, that there are as many as 10,000 scattered throughout the kingdom. What are these odd thousands doing? Notices of their performances rarely get beyond the local press. The plays noticed in "Drama" and other journals devoted to amateur drama must only be a fraction of the multitudes put on the amateur stage. It is to dissipate a little of this ignorance that an inquiry has been instituted.

The attempt has of necessity to be limited in scope. Since it is impossible to question every Society in the country, much less to extract answers from them, the course adopted has been to ask all those Societies affiliated to the British Drama League which pay their subscriptions on the 1st January to tell what plays they had performed or put into rehearsal during the previous year. The number which each Society gives will afford some idea of the quantity of its work, and the names of the plays its quality. Choice of play, to which a definite proportion of marks is allotted in the One Act Festival, is perhaps the best single clue to the value of a Society's work. Good plays are usually well acted, not merely because good plays are the best aid to good acting, but because the mind to which a good play appeals is the mind most likely to respond to the opportunities offered.

From the odd 1,500 Societies invited to send particulars of their productions, 369 replies were received. Of these 7 had produced no plays during the period, 6 read plays only, and 56 were schools. The Schools have been reserved for separate treatment. The Plays of more than One Act presented by the remaining Societies have been classified in the tables that

follow. (The Community Theatre Festival, it is felt, provides sufficient information about One Act Plays. See "Drama" for May, 1939.)

## PLAYS

Of the plays put on 53 per cent. were Comedies, Farces or Fantasies; 47 per cent. were Dramas, Thrillers or Tragedies.

The most popular plays were:

"Springtide"	put on by	15 Societies
"Night Must Fall"	"	13 "
"Winter Sunshine"	"	13 "
"The Housemaster"	"	12 "
"Call it a Day"	"	9 "

Among the more noteworthy plays were:

"The Adding Machine"	"The Ascent of F6"
"Comus"	"The Comedy of Good and Evil"
"The Beaux Stratagem"	"Disraeli"
"Liliom"	"The Miracle at Verdun"
"Murder in the Cathedral"	"Martine"
"The Moon in the Yellow River"	"Parnell"
"Noah"	"The Plough and the Stars"
"The Old Ladies"	"The Voysey Inheritance"
"A Trip to Scarborough"	"Speed the Plough"

12 Religious plays and 9 Pantomimes or Children's plays were produced.

## AUTHORS

Authors in order of popularity are:

Shakespeare	.. .. .	17 plays
(including "Hamlet" (twice) and "King Lear")		
Shaw, G. B.	.. .. .	13 plays
Milne, A. A.	.. .. .	8 "
Hay, Ian	.. .. .	7 "
Galsworthy, J.	.. .. .	6 "
Priestly, J. B.	.. .. .	6 "
Bridie, J.	.. .. .	6 "

with 4 of Ibsen, 2 of Tchekov, and 2 of Pinero.

Jane Austen, though not herself a Dramatist, has to her credit 14 performances of the three different adaptations of "Pride and Prejudice." "I have Five Daughters" by Margaret Macnamara 8  
"Pride and Prejudice" "Helen Jerome 4  
"Miss Elizabeth Bennet" "A. A. Milne 2  
This includes performances by Schools as well.

## NUMBER OF PRODUCTIONS DURING YEAR (One-Act Plays included)

77 Societies put on	1
90 "	2
66 "	3
29 "	4
11 "	5
15 "	6



CLARENCE AND BRAKENBURY IN THE  
TOWER. A SCENE FROM MR. IDEN PAYNE'S  
PRODUCTION OF "RICHARD III" AT THE  
SHAKESPEARE MEMORIAL THEATRE, STRAT-  
FORD-UPON-AVON.

From the drawing by Veronica Haigh.





THE ROEL PUPPETS AT THE TELEVISION  
STUDIO, ALEXANDRA PALACE.

## WHAT ARE THE AMATEURS DOING ?

6 Societies	put on	7
7 " "	" "	8
5 " "	" "	10
1 Society	" "	11
2 Societies	" "	12
1 Society	" "	13
1 " "	" "	14
1 " "	" "	17

Roughly three quarters of the Societies put on not more than three plays a year.

### SCHOOLS

School Societies put on 33 plays

8 of these were by Shakespeare

5 " " " " Shaw

2 " " " " { Milne  
Galsworthy

The others included : "The Knight of the Burning Pestle," "Dr. Faustus," "Singing Sands," "The Pretenders," "Richard of Bordeaux."

To be noted amongst Schools is a joint production by the members of two well-known Colleges for boys and for girls respectively: an admirable arrangement but which might not

be approved by the Miss Pinketons of a by-gone age. Another, probably unique Society consists of the Parents' Association of a School. "Their enthusiasm is wonderful," it is said, "they turn up to rehearsals with amazing regularity." Many Societies would gladly have a few more such parents within their ranks.

These figures, it is hoped, will lighten a little the darkness that envelopes the doings of amateur Societies. On the whole, it may be said, the amateur movement, as regards its standard of play selection and presumably of performance, comes out not so badly. It must be understood however, that the figures given relate only to a sample. A sample to be a reliable indication of the whole should be taken at random, whereas the sample in question is twice over the product of selection, first through membership of the British Drama League, and second through a varying disposition to answer letters. Probably the results give too flattering a picture of the Amateur Movement as a whole.

## THE ART OF THE PUPPET

By George Speaight

THE Puppet answers a fundamental instinct in man; in every century and in every civilisation these little figures have aroused wonder and amusement. In China and the far East they have interpreted epics of Buddhist religion; in Europe they have formed sagas of chivalry and legends of Christianity; they have created immortal national characters and types, and woven around their heroes fantastic tales of enterprise and cunning; Punch and Judy in England, Polichinelle and Guignol in France, Pulchinella and Gerolamo in Italy, Kasperl in Germany, Kasperek in Bohemia, Petroushka in Russia, Karaguez in Greece—these are only a few of the heroes of the puppet stage. Puppets have performed at Court and in Churches, they have had special theatres built for them, they have been the rage of the town. And they have been forgotten and despised and denounced; but always the tradition has been handed on, from father to son, by wandering showmen, and in their time the puppets reappear, almost with the novelty of a new invention.

That is just what is happening to-day. In eighteenth century England the puppet theatre was a fashionable entertainment; in the nineteenth century a few showmen kept the tradition alive on the halls, in the fairs, and in the streets; but the coming of the Cinema drove them almost all out of business, and it seemed as if the puppet theatre was on the point of extinction. Now, within the last few years the puppet has staged a remarkable revival, and it would seem that people are turning from a surfeit of grandiose entertainment to the fresh charm of the marionette; it is too early to claim any really outstanding results, but the Puppet revival is proving something more than a passing craze, and it is revealing potentialities of real artistic and dramatic value.

The construction of a Puppet show calls upon so many arts and crafts that it seems almost impossible for one man to embody them all successfully; he must be carpenter, scene-painter, and electrician, a wood carver, and plastic modeller, a dress-maker, and a good

## THE ART OF THE PUPPET

actor to boot with an extended range of voice control. Certainly if any one man can produce an entire puppet show the result has a very pleasing unity, though it is bound to be circumscribed in some directions; the puppets of William Simmonds are an excellent example of the one man show.

It is well that we can glory in the English tradition of amateur enterprise and puppetry owes its revival very largely to amateur enthusiasm, but we must be careful not to allow amateur effort to become an excuse for incompetent work. Too many puppeteers in attempting too much by themselves, lack one or other of the necessary qualities; their figures may be technically perfect, but they lack dramatic force, or they may produce beautiful static works of art that are clumsy and ineffective in movement. Surely the solution is for groups of, say, half a dozen to combine for the production of puppet plays—some will be more interested in making the figures, some in performing them, some in the incidentals of music and production. There are the beginnings of such groups already in existence, and much valuable, even striking work has been done, but much, much more remains to be accomplished if the puppet theatre is to take its place in the dramatic tradition of the country.

The intending puppeteer must first decide what type of puppet he is going to use; for simplicity and ease of working, many favour the glove puppet, of which Punch and Judy are the classic examples, but delightful though these can be their scope is somewhat limited, and most puppeteers turn to the stringed marionette for the fullest development of the art. It is with the marionette that this article is primarily concerned. In the past the secrets of puppet construction were closely guarded from the uninitiated, to-day there is no difficulty in discovering the mechanics, as it were, of the puppet's anatomy; the activities of the British Puppet and Model Theatre Guild in popularising the art have been invaluable, there is a whole series of manuals on the making of puppets, and best of all, Summer Schools of Puppetry are now held every year.

It is when the figures are made that the most interesting part begins, and it is here that most of the books stop. If possible, the puppeteers should try to see some good puppet performances, for there are many limitations that must be accepted, but many possibilities that

should be made the most of; it is a waste of time to try to make a puppet that will imitate the human actor exactly, though it may be an amusing exercise; the puppet theatre demands its own particular approach and technique. For instance, a puppet has no range of facial expression and cannot expect to hold an ordinary audience for a long soliloquy without breaking it up with movements and gestures that would be quite out of place on the real stage; a puppet cannot perform many of the simplest human actions—such as walking and moving small objects, without clumsiness and difficulty. On the other hand, the puppet can leap high in the air, it can be an animal or an abstraction as easily as a human, it can play a dwarf or a giant to order, it can carry the head of an ox on the legs of a spider, it can convey artificialities and improbabilities that would be ridiculous in the living theatre. Besides, puppets do not arrive late for rehearsals, the leading ladies never suffer from jealousies, they cannot ask for higher salaries; there is, in fact, a great deal to be said for puppets on the ground of convenience! But it is not enough for them to exist solely as amusing imitations of living performers, they ask for the special treatment and understanding to which their long history entitles them, and it is we who must learn and experiment with the methods for which they are best suited.

---

### RECENT RELEASES

"Traitor's Gate" (10 men, 3 women) by Morna Stuart, and "A Party for Christmas" (5 men, 5 women) by N. C. Hunter are recent additions to Samuel French's imposing list of West End plays that have become available for amateur representation. This firm has recently issued an invaluable acting edition, price 2s., of Shakespeare's "Henry the Fifth"; it presents a complete analysis of the dramatic construction of each scene and character, and, in addition, includes a quantity of valuable information that every producer of this play will find of the greatest value.

From the English Theatre Guild, Ltd., releases include: "Give me Yesterday" (4 men, 5 women) by Edward Percy and Reginald Denham, "House Party" (5 men, 6 women) by Frank Stayton and Guy Rawlence, "Money by Wire" (5 men, 5 women) by Edward A. Poulton, and "Goodness, How Sad!" (3 men, 4 women) by Robert Morley—to be released on September 5th.

---

The Sedgley Park Drama Club are prepared to produce suitable plays by amateurs, such plays, however, must not include either comedies or farces, as the Club was formed for the specific purpose of producing serious drama. Secretary: Mr. A. H. Merrifield, 30, George Street, Sedgley Park, Manchester.

## BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE NOTES



THE JOURNAL OF  
**THE BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE**  
INCORPORATING  
**THE VILLAGE DRAMA SOCIETY**

*President:*

**LORD HOWARD DE WALDEN**

*Chairman of the Council:*

**VISCOUNT ESHER**

*Director:* **GEOFFREY WHITWORTH**

*Hon. Treasurer:* **ALEC L. REA**

*MSS. for publication in DRAMA will be considered if accompanied by stamps for return if unsuitable. All enquiries should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary at the Office of the League, 9, Fitzroy Square, London, W.1.*

Telephone: EUSTON 2666

---

*Neither the Editor nor the Drama League as a whole accept any responsibility for the opinions expressed in signed articles printed in this Journal.*

---

LAST month has seen some notable performances outside the ordinary run of theatre production, and among these we note especially the visit of the Greek National Theatre which has played both in Oxford and for a week in London at His Majesty's Theatre. Everyone who has seen this Company in "Electra" and "Hamlet" has joined the chorus of praise. "Electra" especially showed a surprising freshness against a background of tradition which carries the mind beyond the limits of the Christian era to the very birth of Drama. The British Council are indeed to be congratulated on arranging for this visit which is in some sense a return for the visit of the Old Vic Company to Athens a few months ago. Another outstanding event has been the first performance of Miss Dorothy Sayers's "Faust" at the Canterbury Festival. Here was a new version of the "Faust" legend which no doubt will be seen in London and elsewhere as time goes on. It is indeed a welcome feature of the interest now taken in productions of this nature that they are not allowed to vanish after their original production, but are so often revived on later occasions and in new surroundings.

The detailed time-table for the Bangor Summer School has been issued, and is both full and varied. The visit of Monsieur Saint-Denis will be during the second weekend, August 13th and 14th, and he will give two lectures on Acting. We are indeed fortunate to have secured a flying visit from M. Saint-Denis before he starts rehearsals for his autumn work with Mr. John Gielgud. No less than six plays and a ballet will be rehearsed during the school, so there should be parts for every student who wants one. The plays are very varied in type, and include Thornton Wilder's "The Pullman Car Hiawatha," and the new and popular Mexican comedy, "Sunday Costs Five Pesos." A feature of the school will be an exhibition of designs, photographs, properties, etc., contributed by the students themselves. For recreation there is tennis on the premises, good bathing, and a wealth of walks and climbs in the Snowdon district. An expedition will be organised to Bettws-y-Coed. For those who want more sophisticated pleasures there are all the attractions of Llandudno not far distant. Time-tables may be had from the Drama Schools Organiser.

We are pleased to announce that arrangements have been made for Mr. Jack Carlton to visit, on behalf of the British Drama League, a number of cities and towns throughout the country during three months next autumn. He will address a meeting in each place selected, and will be available on successive evenings to assist amateur societies belonging to the League. We could wish Mr. Carlton's engagement was for such a period as would enable him to cover the entire country; but this is an experiment, and during the three months before Christmas it will be realised there are many places that must wait their turn perhaps for some future occasion.

Arrangements for the Birmingham Conference are well under way, as indicated in our last number. In October we hope to publish an article dealing with the history of the theatre in Birmingham by Mr. M. F. Fraser. In the meanwhile, members are reminded to book the date of the Conference, Friday to Sunday, October 27th-29th.

Many of our readers will be interested to learn that Mr. C. B. Purdom has recently been appointed Secretary of British Actors' Equity.

# NATIONAL THEATRE PROGRESS

READERS of "Drama" may be interested to know something of the advance being made towards the realisation of the National Theatre. After many months of intensive work on the designs, and many meetings of the Building Committee, accompanied by consultations with some of the foremost theatre people of the day, the interior plans drawn up by Mr. Cecil Masey have been officially approved by the Executive Committee, and Sir Edwin Lutyens is now at work on his "elevation." In a few days' time we hope that the final designs will be ready for submission to the London County Council, to the Office of Works, to the Commissioners of the 1851 Exhibition and to the Fine Arts Commission, all of whom must give their approval before building operations can be started. When the plans have run the gauntlet of these various authorities, it is hoped that they will be publicly exhibited in the early autumn, and then we shall reproduce all or some of them in "Drama."

At this stage we may divulge that the theatre is designed to hold about 1,050 people, and that the auditorium will be found to include some unusual features. As to the stage equipment, from the technical point of view nothing will be left to desire. Some uninstructed persons have stated that the site in South Kensington is too small for a completely satisfactory theatre. The best answer, perhaps, to this criticism is the bare statement that the stage will be the widest in London, not excepting the giant stages of Drury Lane and Covent Garden. True, the capacity of the house is on the moderate side, but this is thoroughly in line with the policy of the theatre which must cater not only for spectacular plays but also for the more modern naturalistic drama.

As for the appeal for funds, in spite of international politics which have not been exactly favourable, progress is steadily maintained, and now that the City Council of Sheffield has made its magnificent contribution of £500 for the endowment of five seats in the theatre, with a similar civic contribution from Bury of £200 for two seats, not to mention the many less official endowments received both from London and the Provinces, we may truly say that the country as a whole is behind us.

A special Appeal is to be launched in the

English Counties, which starts by a Meeting at Brighton on Monday, July 3rd. The Mayor will preside, and the Speakers will include Sir John Martin-Harvey, Sir Frederick Whyte and Miss Pamela Stanley. Representatives from towns and villages throughout Sussex are expected to attend.

Contributions, large or small, from members of the Drama League and affiliated societies will still be gratefully received by—Mr. Geoffrey Whitworth at the National Theatre Offices, 50, Pall Mall, London, S.W.1.

---

## RICHMOND SHAKESPEARE SOCIETY

The Richmond Shakespeare Society is to be congratulated upon a really beautiful open air production of Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream." The play, admirably produced by Mr. Frank Randell, was presented in the Terrace Gardens, Richmond, on June 21st, 22nd, 23rd and 24th, and is to be repeated in Hyde Park on July 1st. The lovely natural surroundings formed a perfect Open Air Theatre, and an ideal setting for the play. It was beautifully lit and the whole effect was delightful. The music was conducted by J. Hullah Brown and the graceful dancers were from the Geoffrey Espinosa and Roy Schools of Dancing. The cast and team work were excellent, the lovers' quarrel scene being particularly effective.

Mrs. Sverre Eriksen, who is the Hon. Organising Secretary of the Society, will be glad to send particulars to anyone applying to her at Chester House, Chester Avenue. It is to be hoped that Richmond will continue to support this admirable work.

## VACATION CLOSURE OF THE LIBRARY

The Library will be closed for stocktaking and renovations from August 8th—26th. During September the late opening of the Library on Wednesday and Thursday evenings will be suspended, but will recommence on the first Wednesday in October.

---

## THE PASSING OF THE LYCEUM

Ring up the Curtain!  
For this world's a stage where each one plays a part  
And none may falter.  
*Genius*, did you say?  
Once in a hundred years—  
And then a heart must break.  
And mark the reason why  
So few have courage to achieve.  
Ring down the curtain:  
We may wait in vain.

E. P.



# RECENT BOOKS

Reviewed by F. Sladen-Smith

"Kean." By Giles Playfair. Bles. 12s. 6d.  
 "Early Stages." By John Gielgud. Macmillan. 12s. 6d.  
 "Shakespeare Criticism." By C. Nayana Menon. Milford. 5s.  
 "The Amazing Career of Sir Giles Overreach." By Robert Hamilton Hall. Milford. 22s. 6d.  
 "Acting: Its Idea and Tradition." By Robert Speaight. Cassell. 2s. 6d.  
 "Dress: The Evolution of Cut and Its Effect on Modern Design." By R. K. Evans. Faber. 3s. 6d.  
 "Animal Puppetry." By H. W. Whanslaw.  
 "Specialised Puppetry." By H. W. Whanslaw and Victor Hotchkiss. Wells, Gardiner, Darton & Co. 3s. 6d. each.

THE two most important books in this month's batch both concern famous actors—Edmund Kean and John Gielgud. They are in violent contrast; not only, of course, because the two men are utterly different but their work and their world has so little in common that a host of interesting conclusions could be drawn. Mr. Giles Playfair's "Kean" is an absorbing study. The details of a bewildering career have been skilfully marshalled and are re-told without a moment's dullness. A vivid picture emerges of the theatrical world of the early nineteenth century—a world filled with frenzied enthusiasms, violent prejudices, brutal love, restless competition and an amazing zeal for playgoing. Mr. Playfair spares no sympathy for Kean's unfortunate and shallow wife, Mary; his sympathies are, rightly, far more for Kean himself, always in torment from the conflicts caused by a passion for beauty and finished work, and the drunken boasting and reckless disregard for consequences which ruined his life. The whole story is here; the terrible early struggles, the sudden fame, the tragedy of the "Cox v. Kean" case, the bravery with which he faced mobs who tried to yell him off the stage, until, eventually, people came to applaud again, and the last months, living on brandy and forced to work whenever possible, although plainly in a dying condition. It is often said that the style of acting which Kean introduced would be laughed at nowadays, but Mr. Playfair would seem to make a good point when he says that the audiences of that day, who admired Kean, were far more ready to jeer and criticise than ours.

Few will agree with Mr. Playfair that the theatre nowadays is an easy place, but Mr. John Gielgud's charmingly frank and modest book "Early Stages" gives the impression that, although there were struggles and difficulties, for him, at least, it was a comparatively easy ascent from a mannered and, apparently, rather awkward young actor to the star whose name, as he says, will even lead people to visit places which might not attract them. Mr. Gielgud is insistent that one of his besetting sins is self-absorption, but his book is full of generous praise for the players, producers and designers who have worked with him. Readers will be particularly interested in the memories of the author's gifted family (memories which include some excellent pictures of Ellen Terry), and the fascination that the pictorial side of the theatre has always had for

Mr. Gielgud is evident from the descriptions of the décor of some famous productions. At the end there are some trenchant glimpses of the films; glimpses which make one understand afresh the relief with which actors, after days spent in exhausting and sometimes useless work, in the studios, return to "the ordered play performed to schedule."

Professor C. Nayana Menon of Benares Hindu University has written a book, "Shakespeare Criticism," which is remarkable for the author's knowledge not only of Shakespeare's work, but of the work of innumerable other European dramatists and writers. We are told that the object of the book is "to show that almost everything written about Shakespeare is true"; this means that a synthesis is attempted of an elaborate kind; almost every statement is corroborated by a similar statement in some book on drama, philosophy or criticism; this we can learn by referring to the notes at the end. But despite this synthesis, on which the author has set his heart, it is his own beliefs and opinions which are interesting—one of which is that our understanding of the great Shakespearean characters is never due to analysis or criticism, but because we unconsciously identify ourselves with them. In all the chapters, which deal with widely differing questions and problems, the Indian point of view, however, unobtrusively stated, adds a valuable, and sometimes a surprising note.

Sir Giles Mompesson, an extortioner of the seventeenth century, under the cloak of a tax commission, made vast sums of money from inns and taverns, and, as Sir Giles Overreach, is the principal figure in Massinger's play "A New Way to Pay Old Debts." Mr. Robert Hamilton Ball, assistant professor of English at Queens College, New York City, has collected details of performances of the part from all possible sources of information—playbills, engravings, newspapers—and striven to give form to his account by making his book "The Amazing Career of Sir Giles Overreach" a species of biography of Sir Giles. In this he is not particularly successful, but his claim that the book presents a more or less unified view of the English and American stage has some justification, although it makes heavy reading; even the author is conscious of his "long-suffering readers." However, Mr. Ball considers Massinger's play, if not fit to be set alongside of Shakespeare is "at least not many paces in the rear"; and it is true that the part of Sir Giles has attracted famous actors—the Kears, George Frederick Cooke, Junius Brutus Booth, Samuel Phelps, and others.

Mr. Robert Speaight's little book "Acting: Its Idea and Tradition" consists of three lectures delivered in 1938, and is intended mainly for the amateur world. Although Mr. Speaight, like most writers on this mysterious subject, can scarcely tell us much that is new (and the style is somewhat pontifical), his discussion of technical problems is always exceedingly interesting. In "Dress; the Evolution of Cut and Its Effect on Modern Design," Miss R. K. Evans attacks the difficulties of costume-making from a rather different angle from most books on the subject. The historical development of dress is indicated, but there is a great

## RECENT BOOKS

deal of thoroughly practical detail, especially with regard to cutting, drafting and pattern-making. The treatise is illustrated by sketches and diagrams by Miss H. D. Copey.

From Mr. H. W. Whanslaw come two attractive books, "Animal Puppetry" and "Specialised Puppetry." Fully illustrated with photos, drawings and diagrams, they should delight those whose interests lie in the marionette world. Of the two, "Animal Puppetry" is the more satisfactory, and the instructions for making and dealing with animals, birds, fishes, reptiles, insects and mythological monsters are amusing and clearly written. "Specialised Puppetry," in which Mr. Victor Hotchkiss, one of Mr. Whanslaw's assistants collaborates, is concerned with trick marionettes of all kinds; acrobats, magicians, disjointed skeletons; and in the chapter on magic, the celebrated Indian rope trick makes an appearance. Possibly because of its complex subject it is not so easy to follow as the book on animals, and some of the diagrams need close attention if benefit is to be derived from them.

### NEW PLAYS

"Killycreggis in Twilight and Other Plays." By Lennox Robinson. Macmillan. 7s. 6d.

"Forced Landing." By Wilfred Massey. French. 2s.

"The Road to Damascus." By August Strindberg. Cape. 7s. 6d.

"Take Back Your Freedom." By Winifred Holtby and Norman Ginsbury. "As it was in the Beginning." By Naomi Mitchison and Lewis Gielgud. Cape. 3s. 6d. each.

"Story of an African Farm." By Merton Hodge. Heinemann. 5s.

"A Dramatic History of England." By L. du Garde Peach. University of London Press. 5s.

"The Prodigal Son." By Seaward Beddow. S.P.C.K. 2s.

"The Persians." Translated by Gilbert Murray. Allan and Unwin. 2s.

"The Life of King Henry V." By William Shakespeare. French's Acting Edition No. 576. 2s.

AFTER a fairly long interval a book of three new plays by Mr. Lennox Robinson appears, each one filled with pleasant people. No one is allowed to be disagreeable for long; there may be, perhaps, a hint of tragedy at times, but it does not amount to much. The plays are compared with the comedies of the Quintero brothers, and there is some resemblance, but one misses the colourful fragrance and more acid humour. Here, a certain amount of Celtic mist is discernable, especially in "Killycreggis in Twilight" (6 men, 7 women) one more study of a "big house," showing the "harsh, handsome" Judith de Lury, carrying on the home against all odds, but eventually marrying an hotel-keeper, unwillingly leaving the house and its cares to her nephew, Loftus, who radiates the "de Lury charm." This is the best of the three, with its clearly marked characters and authentic atmosphere. "Is Life worth Living?" (8 men, 5 women) produced at the Abbey under the rather better title of "Drama at Inish," is concerned with the appalling results of playing Scandinavian and other high-brow dramas to the inhabitants of a little Irish seaside resort. The whole town takes to gloom, suicides and other disasters

being at least attempted, until the enforced exit of the company and the arrival of a circus puts all things right. It is an amusing situation; worthy of more pointed humour and invention than it receives, but the piece should act well. The last play, "Bird's Nest" (9 men, 2 women) again presents us with a group of likeable, well-meaning people. Joseph Fehily's passion for the advancement of his family causes mixed reactions—the quietly rebellious Hyacinth running away, while the home-loving Josephine sacrifices her Viennese scholarship rather than leave Inish—but Joseph is shown to have a heart of gold, and all the characters are drawn with the essentially amiable, unforced touch which is the chief feature of the whole volume.

In "Forced Landing" (4 men, 6 women), a comedy in three acts by Mr. Wilfred Massey, the author brings his principal characters to live in a bungalow in Kent. They are George and Nick, confirmed women haters, Christopher Brandon, who is little more than a charming scoundrel, his high-spirited daughters, Shirley and Bobbie, and Great Aunt Julia and her companion, Helen. The young men and girls hate each other at sight, although commanded to marry by Aunt Julia, and there is also an undercurrent of swindling on the Stock Exchange. The job is to get the situation tidied up and most people married and reformed before the curtain falls or the old lady dies. It is managed ingeniously, and, in the earlier scenes, amusingly, but it is not so good a play as the author could write if he pulled himself together.

Strindberg's autobiographical trilogy "The Road to Damascus" has been translated from the Swedish by Mr. Graham Rawson. Considering the significance of the work it is extraordinary that, apart from a performance of Part I by the Stage Society in 1937, this is the first time it has appeared in English. The title of the trilogy is intended to suggest the journey and conversion of Saul, but the scenes and characters are such bewildering reflections of the agonized life of the author that it requires all the clarity of Mr. Gunner Öllén's introduction to make some of them even moderately intelligible. However, the startled and confused reader is bound to be fascinated by the nightmare spectacle of "The Stranger" (Strindberg himself), filled with miseries and doubts of all kinds, slowly working his way through despair and semi-madness to a strange peace in a still stranger monastery.

From Messrs. Jonathan Cape come two volumes in their "New Play Series"; both well written, long, serious, not to say heavy plays; and both, it is possible, will only be tackled by the more earnest of the Little Theatres, although Miss Vera Brittain and Mr. Tyrone Guthrie, who sponsor Miss Winifred Holtby's "Take Back Your Freedom" (8 men, 5 women), consider that this play contains the material for a striking success. Mr. St. John Ervine, in a recent article, was of the same opinion. It shows the rise of an English Under-Secretary of State from reasonable beginnings to the worst excesses of Dictatorship—until he is eventually shot by his mother to prevent further misery. It is certainly topical, arresting, and has good scenes, good lines and good characterisation. Whether it will prove to be a memorable play remains to be seen. After the authoress's death it was revised and completed by Mr. Norman Ginsbury.

The second play has none of the humour which enlivens Miss Holtby's work. "As It Was In The Beginning" (14 men, 5 women), by Miss Naomi

## RECENT BOOKS

### THE PLAY OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

By Eric Arnold

Mitchison and Mr. Lewis Gielgud, is a picture of the sufferings of the early Christian Church in the time of Nero. We see the Romans, noble and otherwise, at their feasts; we also see the wretched underworld of Christian slaves, and the gradual conversion of Beric, the son of Caradoc; and, last, in the prison we are given terrible glimpses of torture and death. It is, of course, a deeply religious play, and of the power of many of the tragic scenes there can be no doubt.

"Story of an African Farm," (7 men, 6 women), Mr. Merton Hodge's dramatization of Olive Schreiner's novel, has moments of almost unbearable pathos and intensity; the whole play is unusual, frequently macabre always arresting. It remains, however, fairly obviously a dramatization of a novel; too much has been crowded into the three acts, and, unfortunately, the staging requires a complete section of the interior of the farm to be shown, thus rendering a production in some theatres difficult. But it is a fine piece of work.

Dr. L. du Garde Peach's book, "A Dramatic History of England" consists of thirty short plays, each dealing with a scene from British history, beginning with Alfred, immersed in his problems in 897, and ending with the crowd waiting to hear of Victoria's death in 1901. The work is primarily intended for schools, and a more delightful way of teaching history to youngsters could hardly be imagined. The demands made upon production are of the simplest; the characters are alive and speak spirited and often amusing dialogue; the choice of subject is admirable. It is difficult to single out any particular piece, but "Death at the Altar" (Becket's martyrdom once more), "The Printed Word" (Caxton busy with his books) and the elegant glimpse of the Queen Anne period "The Polite Age" are among the best.

"The Prodigal Son" by the Rev. Seaward Beddow (14 men, 15 women; parts can be doubled) is a colourful and moving dramatization of the famous story. The characters are clearly drawn, and the scenes have considerable emotional power; the atmosphere is skilfully suggested. The play is a very useful contribution to the growing number of religious plays.

Professor Gilbert Murray's translation of *Æschylus' "The Persians"* comes at a moment when the sin of "hubris" once more darkens the political horizon, and the play, with its details of one of the great battles of the world, loses none of its effectiveness in the rhymed verse which Professor Murray again handles so felicitously. Messrs. French's acting editions of Shakespeare constitute complete prompt copies, and "King Henry V" proves to be one of the most interesting of the series. The book follows the general scheme of the production at Drury Lane last autumn, and contains a minute analysis of every scene and character by Mr. George Skillan and effective and practical designs for the settings by Mr. Edward Carrick.

---

The Ginner Mawer Summer School will be held from August 3rd—9th at the Portman Rooms, Baker Street, London. Miss Ruby Ginner and Miss Nancy Sherwood will hold classes in Greek and National Dancing, while Miss Mawer and Miss Joyce Ruscoe will take Classes in Mime, Expressive and Historic Movement. The fees are moderate, and full particulars will be sent on application to the Secretary of the School, Philbeach Hall, Philbeach Gardens, London, S.W.5.

IN times of great movement and change such as we are now enduring, it is natural to expect literature to reflect aspects of the forces that are moulding or seeking to mould, the future. Modern poets have sensed the approaching future and reacted in their various ways, as have also, to a greater or less degree, the painters, sculptures and the architects. Drama also has its development, but owing to a variety of causes—chiefly economic owing to the necessity of a stage and the need to attract an immediate public—experiments in drama, revolutionary experiments—are rare. But at the same time, owing to this very need to attract immediate attention, the developing drama more fundamentally reflects the evolving consciousness of mankind.

For long we have regarded "Plot" as the essential feature of drama; all our manuals assume that the re-discovered principles of the Greeks finally and irrevocably changed the medieval conceptions and that Mystery and Morality, where it still exists, was either a strange survival or a mere picturesque revival. The Renaissance, we used to believe, was a turning point in the development of our civilisation and that there was no possibility of return.

But now we are not so sure.

T. S. Eliot's "Murder in the Cathedral," especially, in its amazing success demonstrated that there was life in the old tradition—though much of its attraction may have been due to the skill with which Greek and modern elements were fused, and the play was essentially "Renaissance" in its individuality. There have been other returns to the Middle Ages, plays performed in churches in connection with religious mysteries, and these are interesting as indications of a feeling for medievalism though there is no deep significance in mere revivals.

Of more importance are such stupendous productions as the Mystery Play at Notre Dame in Paris, which I was privileged to see last year. Certainly it was a revival—but a revival with a difference. A vast audience raised on great tiers of seats were able to see the whole performance of great crowds of actors on an enormous stage, to hear every word spoken,

## THE PLAY OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

by the aid of loudspeakers and to enjoy the spectacle of skilful and beautiful floodlighting. It is in the adaptation of all modern inventions to the service of the old idea that this play is remarkable.

In Bruges, for the Play of the Precious Blood, (by Jozef Boon, produced by Anton Van de Velde), not only was lavish use made of loudspeakers and floodlighting, but the whole play, so medieval as in parts it was, had been written for the occasion, and had reference not merely to theological and religious truths, but to the essential problems that confront humanity in this very year of grace. It was Mystery, Morality and Pageant, fused into a single whole, and presenting a single theme.

It is not profitable to seek for parallels, nor to trace influences, the Play must be considered as itself.

The theme of this Play of the Precious Blood is simple to state: the origin of the sacred relic, its arrival in Bruges, the vicissitudes it has suffered and the need to guard it—and Bruges—from the enemies of God. But, as in all great drama, there is symbolism, both explicit and implicit—intended and emergent. In the last Act the Precious Blood becomes merged in the conception of the Christian Faith, and its enemies are all those who cry "God is Dead."

Act 1 is almost pure Mystery: a version of the Passion, showing the crowds of Jews, egged on by their leaders to demand the death of Jesus from Pontius Pilate, who produces Jesus crowned with thorns. There follows a presentation of the Way of the Cross—the actual Crucifixion omitted—culminating in the spectacle of Joseph of Arimathea receiving the chalice of Precious Blood from the group around the Cross, which suddenly appears when the veil is withdrawn and reveals a more than life-size Crucifix, high above the stage, over the balcony that juts out from the Belfry Tower.

Such is the bare outline of the Act, but it is impossible in words to convey how glorious the spectacle is made—the skilful grouping of the figures, recreating the colours and emotional appeal of the painting of the Flemish Primitives of whom Hans Memlinc is the type. All the turrets of the Market Hall and Belfry are ablaze with bright angels who add their voices to the singing. An enormous orchestra and choir supplies the "chorus" while the piercing clear voice of Mater Dolorosa and

the resonant tones of the male actors convey meaning even to one ignorant of the Flemish tongue.

The stage occupies the whole front of the Market Hall—the width of the large square—and rises to a point thirty metres above the level of the roadway to where the famous stone figure of Notre Dame des Halles remains, throughout most of the play, appropriately floodlit. The stage is admirably constructed to provide a diversity of platforms of varying heights, and a series of broad stairways up and down which groups of actors move in graceful procession. In places it is pierced with arched openings providing exits and entrances for the large crowd, who also use the roads on either side of the hall. In addition to this stage the road in front is used by the stage crowd, upwards of 2,000 actors taking part in some of the crowd scenes. On the left of the Great Square the choir and orchestra occupy a large platform erected in front of the Government Offices.

The effects gained by the floodlighting in different colours and at different times—the resultant darkness when all the lights are out at the moment of The Passion, and the gradual return of brilliance after the first wailing cry of Mater Dolorosa, justify a bold use of modern inventions; while the tolling of the Belfry Bell and the synchronised pealing of bells from the Cathedral and Parish Churches display an equal boldness in the use of familiar sounds.

As it is "Mystery" there is little scope for individual acting though the clever use of the crowd and the symbolising of the "Ring-leaders" makes something far truer than mere realism.

The Second Act is almost pure Pageant—but gorgeous pageant made rich by careful replicas of Medieval costumes, liveries and standards. Again the use of lighting is very effective, from the moment when the watchmen in the turrets call to the people (who soon cumber the lower stage, many carrying lanterns) to the torchlight procession conducting Thierry of Alsace, accompanied by knights on horseback, and culminating in the reception of the Precious Blood by the Bishop of Bruges. This procession forms in the streets at the back of the Square and comes slowly along the side, between the choir and the seated audience.

The whole tower is ablaze, and, as the procession arrives, an enormous silken banner, bearing the device of the Flanders Lion, is



THE PLAY OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD, BRUGES.  
THE TEMPORARY STAGE IN THE MARKET  
PLACE.





*Photo: Roynon Raikes.*

SCENE FROM "AUTUMN CROCUS" BY  
DODIE SMITH, AS PRODUCED BY THE KERWIN  
PLAYERS, 1939.

stre  
of  
L  
Pre  
ant  
eve  
dan  
app  
wa  
wh  
the  
act  
tov  
dar  
his  
syn  
The  
Pre  
at  
Ph  
enc  
and  
W  
the  
Su  
po  
bre  
wh  
slu  
tak  
pla  
the  
cro  
con  
me  
rio  
the  
Th  
gre  
of  
eit  
flo  
the  
the  
Ma  
des  
fig  
cro  
sta  
ov

## THE PLAY OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

stretched between the first and second galleries of the Belfry.

But without Act Three the Play of the Precious Blood would be little more than antiquarianism; in this act the author risked everything and made a declaration of faith. The darkness and the staccato music herald the appearance of a confused crowd, to whom the watchman of the Tower declares the danger in which they stand because madness has seized the nations and they seek to slay God.

There are historical events on which this act is based—when enemies have attacked the town and when the sacred Phial has been in danger; but the careful avoidance of definite historical reference makes the whole act symbolic of the troubles of the present time. The Burghers think first of the safety of the Precious Blood, and, as the invaders are reported at hand, a citizen is found to take charge of the Phial and hide it from danger. Then the enemies enter, clad in dark tattered garments, and, in the dim light, gradually approach the Watchman of the City whom they mock with the cry of "Watchman, what of the night." Suddenly they overpower him, and, after a poignant lament from the music, pandemonium breaks out. There is confused running, whistling, hooting, blowing of sirens and slurred orchestral music. The dark figures take over the stage, torches appear, lurid light plays in flashes from the top to the bottom of the Belfry. More brightly, garishly clad crowds join in the riot, the bells jangle confusedly and then comes silence.

The ringleaders declare the victory of Satan: "Advance! Men of evil will who follow me! To the great revolution of nations!"

Immediately there is confused noise of a riotous crowd, jangling of jazz-like music, and the Belfry is lighted from top to bottom. Then suddenly, as the lights turn to red and green, there is a terrible cry of fear, the torches of the crowd are extinguished and the rioters either fall prostrate or slink away. The floodlight shows Our Lady of the Sorrows on the topmost platform of the stage and, above, the floodlit crucifix, as in Act I.

The prostrate watchman moves and cries. Mary descends as the watchman declares the desire of the citizens to prove worthy. Other figures surround Our Lady, while, below, crowds of hooded citizens gradually fill up the stage. Mary declares that she ever watches over the city and the people vow that they

will build the city as a strong bulwark. All the street in front of the stage is filled; more people come from the side streets, watchmen and warriors fill the stage, and finally come processions from each of the parish churches of the city, each headed by its patron saint. These take up positions in front of the windows of the hall, the attendants bearing enormous, lighted candles. Every turret and balcony of the hall and Belfry is ablaze and each has its complement of angelic figures; the very top of the Belfry shines like a crown and all the church bells in the town begin to ring. The orchestra and the choir break out into jubilant song and, to the noise of trumpets, Joseph of Arimathea approaches with the grail to the central platform, where angels kneel before him and help to raise the grail just under the cross. The whole assembly, with hands stretched upward, appears to be partaking of a great Communion, and the music soars to a final note of triumph.

The play will be again performed five times in Bruges between August 5th and 15th.

---

### WATFORD

The Watford Repertory Co., under the production of Miss Rose Lloyd-King, revived the delightful comedy "Secrets" by Rudolph Besier and May Edgington—at the St. John's Hall, Watford, on Friday and Saturday, April 28th and 29th.

The large audience that gathered on both nights saw how effective the venture was. It was careful attention to points of detail that went a long way towards the success of the play.

M. G. R.

### "HASSAN" IN THE OPEN AIR

The Chelsfield Village Hall Playreading and Dramatic Society are producing Flecker's "Hassan" as an open-air performance on the evenings of July 21st and 22nd. The play will be given at Woodlands, Chelsfield Village, Kent. This play has seldom, if ever, been attempted in its entirety by an amateur society. Particulars from Mrs. Curtis, Timbers, Homestead Road, Chelsfield Park, Kent.

### SHAKESPEARE STUDIES AT STRATFORD

The third Shakespeare Conference at Stratford-upon-Avon will be held this year from August 27th to September 8th, when lectures will be given by many world-famous authorities. The organisers, Dr. G. B. Harrison and Mr. John Garrett, intend by means of the Conference to bring both to the student and to the ordinary playgoer an opportunity to increase his knowledge of the Shakespearian theatre. Full particulars from the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford.

# HOW TO PROMPT

By Philip B. Barry

I THINK it may be said without any fear of contradiction that hardly one person in fifty knows how to "hold the book" during a rehearsal or "at night." It is usually assumed that anybody who can read is capable of the job; but that is one of the most deadly errors of which the human brain is capable. For, good prompting is a sort of art, and requires some study and certainly a good deal of instinctive adaptability.

In the first place, were I producing a play, I would see to it that the person who held the book at rehearsals, performed the *same* duty during the performance. Why? Because if an actor "dries" at a certain point, when he is rehearsing, it is more than probable that he will stick there on the night. The prompter should therefore mark in his promptbook that "dangerous corner" and be ready with a prompt when the actor gets near it. Many a nasty "stick" would be avoided by following this amazingly simple course.

An egregious blunder made by too many prompters consists in keeping the eyes on the words that are being spoken when the proper course is to rivet the gaze on the words some tiny distance *ahead*. Very rarely does a performer stick in the middle of a line, but frequently when the sequence is broken. For example, consider the following extract from a short speech:—

"Well, as I was a-sayin', men are men and women are women, and you can't get over that can ye? But I 'ave heard of some men wot acted more like monkeys than 'uman beings, etc. etc. etc."

Now, assume that your prompter keeps his eyes fixed on the line ending with the words "can ye?" The actor sticks at the next words, because the sequence has been broken, and owing to the prompter's gaze being riveted on the "*can ye*," he may have to wait two or three seconds at least before he gets the prompt for the "But I 'ave heard, etc."—Had the prompter been carrying on his attention to the next sequence, he would have had the prompt ready on the instant. This may not be a very good illustration, but it will perhaps serve its purpose.

Now for another warning. The person holding the book should never stir from the prompt corner during the act, nor should he

chat with friends. Moreover, he certainly should not smoke. I remember how once on tour, I saw people in the stalls getting up to go, fearing that a fire had broken out on the stage, but as a matter of fact, the "Fire" was merely the smoke coming from the prompter's huge pipe!

One sometimes hears the sardonic remark "Nobody was audible except the prompter." This proves that if the actors did not know their business, the prompter was equally guilty. For, the proper method of giving the "word" is to shield the section of the jaw nearest to the audience with the open hand and to direct the voice *up* stage rather than down stage. Some inexperienced prompters adopt a loud whisper, which is usually quite useless, for nobody can catch it. If the hand is manipulated in the manner suggested and the voice directed likewise, then the player should plainly hear his "prompt," without the audience being let into the secret.

Perhaps the worst sort of prompter is the nervous amiable person, who dreads giving a "prompt" which later he may find to have been unnecessary, the pause having been made for "effect." To some extent, his tremors are justified, for we all know the aggressive actor who, the instant the curtain is down, will curse the unhappy wretch in the corner for having "jumped in" with a prompt which was never needed. But let the prompter who wishes to do his job properly ignore this danger. Far better to give a prompt that isn't needed than to withhold one that *is*! But the former danger can be avoided by following the play carefully during rehearsals. The prompter can then mark in the script any cue which is followed by a short or long pause. He will know when it is due, and will wait for it without the slightest anxiety.

Long speeches often call for frequent prompts. On those occasions let the prompter beware of giving his man what I might call a "useless" line. Imagine, for example, that an actor suddenly sticks at a line beginning with the words:—"As I have already told you . . ."

Give him that line, and it is more than probable that he will stand dumb as an oyster, unable to proceed, because it is a "useless" one. In a case of the kind, cut the line

## HOW TO PROMPT

and hurry on to the *essential* words that follow. It is difficult, of course, to dogmatize on a point of this kind, but I throw out the hint to give a general clue to my meaning.

Finally, beware of the most fatal blunder of all. *Never take a man back!* Even if he has cut out half a speech, don't attempt to bring him back so that he may speak the omitted words. Even an experienced actor might be severely "flummoxed" by this act, while the inexperienced player would doubtless be driven to desperation. Let him quietly continue from the point which he has reached,

and utter a silent prayer that his omissions have not affected the story.

Of course, a great deal more might be written concerning this highly difficult art of prompting, but if I have succeeded in showing that it is an art which needs care, study and concentration, and above all, great alertness and tact, and is not merely a "job" which can be left to any chance "friend" or raw beginner then I shall feel that this article has perhaps not been wholly without its uses.

## NEWS FROM NORTH AND SOUTH

### A NOTABLE SEASON ON MERSEYSIDE

Like every other amateur stage community we on Merseyside did not know, at the beginning of the last season, whether there would, indeed, be any season to speak of at all. The spectre of war loomed very near, and nothing was more certain than that if the worst did happen amateurs would be immediately concerned with something a good deal more realistic than the tinsel drama of the theatre.

As things have turned out, however, the season has proved to be one of the most interesting and enterprising we have had for many years.

Plays new to the district have made their appearance in appreciable numbers, and there is evidence, from the way many of these and others have been performed, that the efforts of those who take the amateur theatre seriously, and have endeavoured over a number of years to raise its standard, is having effect.

Outstanding among plays seen for the first time in the district have been Kapeck's "Power and Glory" to which the Liverpool W.E.A. Players gave a sensitive production in January. Prior to that we had seen, at the hands of the Unity Players, T. B. Morris's Egyptian play, "The Beautiful One," not an impressive piece of drama but at all events giving opportunity for a production notable for its staging.

Early in the same month, November, the Delta Players had revived George Colman's eighteenth-century comedy, "The Jealous Wife," and done it with a nice vivacity. Later, in January, they gave us Ibsen's "Rosmersholm," and a finely-acted production it was. Meantime, the Midland Bank Dramatic Society had given us our first viewing of "The Strange Case of Blondie White," while the Hoylake Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society—who have not produced opera for a long time—were the first, and so far the only society in the local field with Dorothy Sayer's "Busman's Honeymoon."

That exceedingly popular comedy "The Housemaster" was introduced to Merseyside by the Lucilla A.D.S. of Crosby, and they then proceeded to win the Morecambe Drama Festival with it. Another "first-timer" was "The Two Mrs. Carrolls" by the Birkenhead

Dramatic Society, who nowadays always play in Liverpool, since their home-town, across the Mersey, has no theatre.

Other outstanding productions in the early part of the season were "Candida" by the Green Room Dramatic Society, and "The Witch" by the Players Dramatic Society.

One of the most striking productions of the season was seen in March when the Merseyside Left Theatre Club, who got into trouble for including unlicensed dialogue in their presentation of "Waiting for Lefty" at Chester Drama Festival, presented for the first time in the North, Irwin's Shaw's play "Bury the Dead" at the David Lewis Theatre, Liverpool. This stimulating anti-war play makes big demands on producer, actors and stage-staff, and the club demonstrated considerable facility in all three directions.

Another outstanding event in March was the Revillo Comedy Company's "Service," the last production for the society by Mr. Cecil M. Long who has been their honorary producer for thirty years, and who is retiring from business and going to live in the South.

Mr. Long has been generally recognised as Merseyside's foremost amateur producer, and he has a record of high achievement that is certainly quite unsurpassed locally. "Service" provided a fitting climax to a great career in the amateur theatre, a fine production acted with skill and resource by a company that was obviously putting its last ounce into the show.

Two other presentations of note have been Maugham's "For Services Rendered" by the Liverpool Playgoers' Club and Shaw's "On The Rocks" by the Unity Players.

Local authors have not been so busy this season—although Merseyside has half-a-dozen and more who have done good work in the past. Two new plays only have been seen. "They Were Persuaded" by David Ness was given by All Souls Amateur Dramatic Society a few weeks before the young author, a member of the society, passed away in his early twenties from an incurable disease. The other was a one-act play, "The Simmon's Contract" by Harold King, warden of the David Lewis Club, and given in the British Drama League One-Act Festival by the Delta Players.

OSCAR L. TURNER.

## NEWS FROM NORTH AND SOUTH

### EXETER DRAMA LEAGUE. 1938-9

This Society has, according to custom, given five plays of differing types in the past season.

1. "The Fourth Wall" by A. A. Milne, by a producer new to us, Mr. Geoffrey Graf. In spite of the recent spate of crime plays this one still holds an audience by its character drawing and something not quite conventional in its thrills, which were most competently handled.

2. "Pride and Prejudice" in Helen Jerome's adaptation of Jane Austen's delicious novel, produced by Miss Rhona Wingfield. By no means an easy choice for amateurs it was an outstanding success, proceeding with speed and slickness in spite of clever characterisation and leisurely period atmosphere. Bookings were so numerous that a repeat performance had to be given.

3. Tchekov's "Cherry Orchard," produced by Mr. Cecil Bishop. This was the first full-length play of the author's to be given in Exeter, and a most interesting and valuable experience to both audience and players.

4. "Othello," produced by Mrs. John Lloyd, fully justified the boldness of the choice. Well cast and played at top speed there was no slackening of the emotional tension, while the simple period costumes and setting were helpful to the eye. This seems to have been the popular success of the season, holding packed houses and drawing spectators from as far off as Chard.

5. "Square Pegs" by Lionel Brown produced by Mrs. Woolley, made a most amusing conclusion to the season. Although of the lightest, it gives scope for some very humorous character drawing of life in a provincial doctor's family, a condition familiar to both players and audience.

In addition to these full length plays, "Love and How to Cure It," by Thornton Wilder was produced by Mr. Cecil Bishop and entered for the British Drama League Festival and got as far as the second round.

### HULL

At the Annual Meeting of the Hull Playgoers' Society held in the Subscription Library, Hull, a general discussion as to the future of the Society took place and the Treasurer announced that he had a balance in hand which would be used towards some future production.

It is, perhaps, interesting to note that for the thirty-eighth year in succession, Mr. Sheppard was re-elected President, having occupied the chair since the formation of the Society which was first known as the "Shakespeare Society."

An interesting collection of old Hull Theatre Royal bills issued during the years 1825-6, and given to the Hull Museum by Mr. R. N. Tune of Hull, shows that in the early days certain types of plays were popular, whereas those by Shakespeare and others, as to-day, were not so well received.

The little collection evidently belonged to the Manager of the Theatre who has written at the back of each bill the amount of money taken for each performance.

### FINAL OF THE LONDON BOYS' CLUBS' DRAMA COMPETITION

In awarding the shield to Stamford Hill at the Scala on May 2nd, Sir Kenneth Barnes said that, during the seven years since he had last seen the competition, the boys' acting had developed out of all knowledge. In power and breadth of treatment the young actors were quite equal to the bigger and better theatre in which they were now acting. He particularly praised the high quality of the speech-work.

At the same time, if this year's festival is compared with that of 1938, it must be admitted that the highest, peaks of last year were not quite attained. We have of course, come to expect a very high standard indeed for the Boys' Clubs and this was certainly reached. However last year we were lucky enough to have several quite exceptional achievements.

Stamford Hill gave a very fine performance of scenes from "Julius Caesar." In addition to first rate performances by the principals, the whole of this large cast maintained a consistently high level and the teamwork was admirable. Praise must go to the producer for the dignity with which he handled that difficult scene in which the Senators have to "bathe" their "hands in Caesar's blood up to the elbow." The production throughout showed great imagination.

West Central in scenes from "King Henry VI" part 2, proved the importance of every member of the crowd making the most of his part. Characterisation was particularly good.

A. M. G.-C.

### TOYNBEE HALL THEATRE CLUB

On June 8th, 9th and 10th, the Toynbee Hall Players presented Molière's "Le Malade Imaginaire" at the Toynbee Hall Theatre. It was played in English and the translation used was that made in 1739 by H. Baker and J. Miller.

Both production and acting were of a very high standard. To present any work of Molière's is a very ambitious undertaking as the stylised acting that is required needs years of study in technique. Nevertheless, the Toynbee Hall Players gave a really excellent performance and are also to be congratulated upon making and painting the very effective scenery designed by Lotte Reiniger. The music composed and conducted by Hans Gellhorn was delightful and the whole production under J. L. Hodgkinson was a great success.

### UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL DRAMATIC SOCIETY

Since October last this Society has presented a programme mainly of one-act plays. These include "Sad about Europe," "An Evening at Nero's," "Two Gentlemen of Soho," "Count Albany," "The Road of Poplars" and "The Long Christmas Dinner." Three-act plays produced include "The Breadwinner" by Somerset Maugham, and "The Three Sisters."

"The Long Christmas Dinner" was entered for the Blackpool Drama Festival in the open drama class, and the Club was fortunate to win the first prize and trophy. One of the cast, Miss Eileen King, was also highly praised for her individual performance. Both this play and others in the repertoire were produced by Mr. R. Rymer, with Mr. P. W. Banks as stage manager.



# FRENCH'S

*Announce the release for representation by amateurs of the following plays:—*

I KILLED THE COUNT

GLORIOUS MORNING

LOT'S WIFE

A PARTY FOR CHRISTMAS

TRAITOR'S GATE

WHITEOAKS

*and the following as from the dates mentioned:—*

TIME AND THE CONWAYS (August 1st)

I HAVE BEEN HERE BEFORE (August 1st)

THE ISLAND (September 1st)

POISON PEN (Available in certain towns)

**SAMUEL FRENCH LTD.,**

**LONDON: 26, SOUTHAMPTON ST., STRAND, W.C.2**

**MANCHESTER: 59, CROSS STREET**

## English Theatre Guild Limited

*Release Date: Sept. 15th*

### Goodness, How Sad!

*Now Available:*

### Give Me Yesterday House Party Money By Wire

**English Theatre Guild Limited**  
**24, WHITCOMB STREET, LONDON, W.C.2**

### LATEST PRESS OPINION

*Manchester Evening News:*

" ' Goodness, How Sad!' is as good as 'The Wind and the Rain' and twice as good as 'George and Margaret.' It may be said that this is a thoroughly charming comedy and the characters, for the first time since 'The Good Companions,' are all the kind of people you enjoy meeting in private life, and the dialogue is as good as Dodie Smith's and occasionally more penetrating."

# ROY LIMBERT presents the MALVERN FESTIVAL

AUGUST 7  
to  
SEPT. 2  
1939



in association with  
CEDRIC HARDWICKE  
Dedicated to  
BERNARD SHAW

SIX WORLD PREMIÈRES BY  
JAMES BRIDIE  
S. I. HSIUNG  
ALEXANDER KNOX  
EVADNE PRICE & RUBY MILLER  
ROBERT VANSITTART  
BERNARD SHAW

INCLUSIVE SEVEN-DAY TOURS  
SPECIALLY ARRANGED BY  
DEAN & DAWSON LTD.

Inclusive Price of Tour (covering travel tickets, accommodation at comfortable private hotel with breakfast, luncheon and dinner, Theatre seats, sightseeing, transfers, services of representative and all entertainment) :-

From :-	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Barnsley ...	8 13 6	Leicester ...	8 4 0
Birmingham ...	7 17 6	Lincoln ...	8 12 6
Bolton ...	8 12 6	Liverpool ...	8 11 6
Bournemouth ...	8 16 0	Manchester ...	8 11 6
Bradford ...	8 16 0	Newcastle ...	9 13 0
Brighton ...	9 0 0	Nottingham ...	8 6 6
Cambridge ...	8 14 0	Oldham ...	8 11 6
Cardiff ...	8 4 6	Portsmouth ...	8 15 6
Doncaster ...	8 13 6	Rochdale ...	8 12 6
Glasgow ...	10 8 0	Romford ...	8 15 0
Halifax ...	8 16 0	Rotherham ...	8 11 0
Harrogate ...	9 0 0	Sheffield ...	8 10 6
Huddersfield ...	8 14 0	Southampton ...	8 12 0
Hull ...	9 0 6	Stockport ...	8 10 0
Leeds ...	8 16 0	Stockton ...	9 7 0
London ...	£8 12 6		
Reduction for:-			
Boarding House ...	£1 1 0		
Extra for:-			
First Class Hotel ...	£1 11 6		

Full details from any  
DEAN & DAWSON OFFICE  
OF  
MALVERN FESTIVAL BUREAU  
4, Winter Gardens, Malvern

## THE ROEL PUPPETS

Poems, Fables, Ballads, Folk Plays, Contemporary Drama.

Available for performances anywhere.

A SUMMER SCHOOL OF PUPPETRY will be held for a fortnight during August in the Cotswolds. Full instruction by experts in the making and performing of marionettes; talks, lectures, and performances.

Write for particulars to:

The Roel Puppet Theatre, Roel Farm, Guiting Power, near Cheltenham, Gloucestershire.

## "LETITIA MEETS THE FAMILY."

(Comedy, 1 setting, 5m. 3f.)

'Zest of a Wodehouse tale at its best'—(Manchester Guardian.)  
'You will enjoy doing it'—(Amateur Theatre.)

## "UNDERCURRENTS." (2 settings 9 characters.)

'Dramatically brought to fruition with fine skill. Its character sketching is rich and diverse.'—(Manchester City News.)  
'The characters are extremely well drawn. Essentially an acting play.'—(Amateur Theatre.)

## "LIMPETS." (Comedy, 1 setting, 3m. 6f.)

'Abounds in humour'—(Amateur Theatre.)

The above plays by ROSS HILLS are published at 2/6 net each.

MODERATE GRADED FEES.

The Walpole Press

West Hill, Old Costessey, Norwich.

## SHAKESPEARE MEMORIAL THEATRE STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

# SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

Under the Direction of B. IDEN PAYNE

APRIL 3rd to SEPT. 16th or 23rd  
1939

### REPERTOIRE:-

Much Ado About Nothing;	As You Like It;
The Taming of the Shrew;	Twelfth Night;
The Comedy of Errors;	Coriolanus;
King Richard the Third;	Othello.

A change of Play at each performance

Nightly at 8. Matinees every Wed. and Sat. at 2.30

Detailed Programme and full information from:-

The Box Office, Memorial Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, Telephone 2271 or 2272; or from W. H. Savary, General Manager, The Stratford-upon-Avon Festival Company, Kent House, 87, Regent Street, London, W.1. Phone: Regent 9781  
AND AT ALL TRAVEL AGENCIES.

There are seventeen plays available in the New Play Series published by Jonathan Cape. Full details can be obtained from them.

The Latest Additions are

## Take Back Your Freedom, A Play in Three Acts WINIFRED HOLTBY and NORMAN GINSBURY

With a preface by Vera Brittain and an introduction by Tyrone Guthrie

'Her dialogue is crisp and full of a character, and her people are alive, each ably and clearly drawn and defined . . . it was her sense of eternal emotions which set Winifred Holtby high above her contemporaries. She had a Shakespearian and Dickensian love of mankind. If she had lived she must have peopled our stage with rich and abundant natures.' ST. JOHN ERVINE in the OBSERVER 3s. 6d. net

## As it was in the Beginning, A Play in Three Acts NAOMI MITCHISON and LEWIS GIELGUD

'A play about the persecution by the Emperor Nero of the early Christians. This is a play which is urgently for the times ; it demands to be produced.' The TRIBUNE 3s. 6d. net

To be published in the autumn

## The Sulky Fire by JEAN-JACQUES BERNARD

Five Plays, *Martine, The Unquiet Spirit, Invitation to a Voyage, The Springtime of Others and The Sulky Fire.* 7s. 6d. net

JONATHAN CAPE THIRTY BEDFORD SQUARE LONDON

## EVERY ACTOR

wants a part that will stand out.  
IN:—

★ DOCTOR MY BOOK (4W., 6M.) VENGEANCE IS MINE (4W., 2M.)  
THE CARETAKER (3W., 3M.) THE SILVER CANDLESTICK (3W., 5M.)  
THE PASSWORD (1W., 3M.) THE UNBIDDEN GUEST (1W., 5M.)  
WHAT WILL HE DO WITH IT (4M.)

Every Part Does.

"The Hit of the evening . . .

*They rocked with laughter"*

wrote the producer of a programme of three one act plays last season of **Doctor My Book**

★ TELEVISED Nov. 30; Dec. 3, '38. June 19; 28, '39.

BROADCAST several times from 25 stations.

TRANSLATED into 9 foreign languages.

COPIES will be lent you FREE OF CHARGE for consideration.

FEE—One Guinea per Performance

Address:

Rudolph de Cordova, 99 Oxford Gardens, London, W.10

## PLAYS for AMATEURS

W.I.'s and VILLAGE CLUBS

JUST PUBLISHED

MUM'S THE WORD By MARGARET MACNAMARA.  
A Tragi-Comedy in One Act for 5 women and 1 silent man.  
(Playable by a cast of 6 women.) Scene: A Tenement Living Room. 30 mins. 1s. 1d.

READY SHORTLY.

NEXT PLEASE! By AGATHA SCOTT.  
A Light Comedy in One Act for 2 men, 11 women, 1 child (optional). (Also suitable for an all-women cast.) Scene: A Doctor's Waiting Room. Good character parts. Especially suitable when a number of small parts are needed. 20 mins. 1s. 1d.

THE VERY OLD LADY. By JOHN HOARE.  
A Drama. Two men, three women. Scene: An old-fashioned sitting-room in a house in Kent. Period: Present day. This play portrays the last hour in the life of a very old lady of ninety-six. Time about 25 minutes. Typescript copies may be had on hire. Reading Fee 1s.

COUP DE GRACE. By LILIAN I. SAYCE.  
5f. Dramatic Comedy. Cardinal's Audience Chamber. 25 mins. 1s. 1d.

A BACKWARD GLANCE. By OLIVE M. DAY.  
6f. Humorous Sketch. Drawing Room. 20 mins. 1s. 1d.

A MATTER OF FACT. By LILIAN I. SAYCE.  
7f. Amusing Sketch. Room interior. 20-25 mins. 1s. 1d.

THE BORDER LINE. By GORDON WRIGHT.  
3m., 2f. (off stage). Tense Drama.  
Scene: The Valley of the Shadow of Death. 30 mins. 1s. 1d.

—See "THUMB NAIL PLOTS," Part II (with Addenda)—  
===== A Descriptive Guide to Plays, post free, 6d. =====

JOSEPH WILLIAMS LIMITED

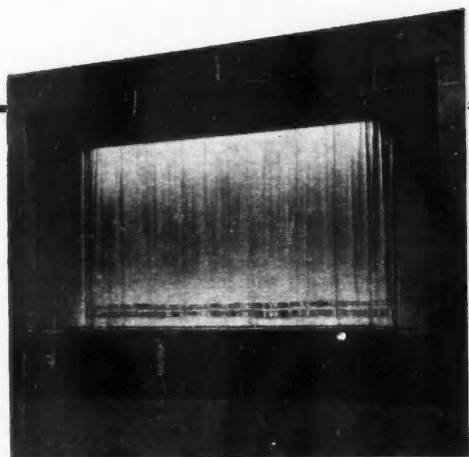
29, Enford Street, London, W.1

## Economical Stage Lighting Schemes

See that your Stage Lighting equipment is supplied by reputable lighting Engineers. Your apparatus should be reliable and efficient even although economy may restrict your plans.

We shall be pleased to give free advice on all Stage Lighting matters, and to submit economical schemes for lighting your school stage, together with details of our exclusive Hire Service which reduces initial outlay to a minimum, yet provides for full stage lighting for any play. Anything from a single spotlight to full stage equipment may be hired.

**LET STRAND LIGHT YOUR STAGE**



# STRAND

STRAND ELECTRIC & ENGINEERING CO., LTD. ● 24, FLORAL STREET, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON, W.C.2  
Telephone No.: Temple Bar 7464

Branches at 399/405, OLDHAM ROAD, MANCHESTER and "ARDEE HOUSE," 38, TALBOT STREET, DUBLIN.

## DOREEN ERROLL

*Leading Theatrical Costumier*

★ **Designed and Executed the Principals' Costumes for  
"Romeo and Juliet"**

(DONALD WOLFIT TOUR—SPRING, 1939)

*Complete Sets for 100 Period Plays, and a complete Eighteenth Century Wardrobe*

**8/9, Carlisle Street, Soho Square, W.1**

(GERRARD 4136)

## COSTUMES

UNIFORMS  
AND  
ALL STAGE  
AND SCREEN  
REQUISITES

# RAYNES

**30 RUPERT STREET, LONDON, W.1**

GERRARD 5336

# SIMMONS FOR COSTUMES

**OUR  
PRESTIGE  
IS  
YOUR  
GUARANTEE**

KING STREET • COVENT GARDEN • LONDON

## "O NOW BEGONE — MORE LIGHT AND LIGHT IT GROWS. . ."

The dawning of a new day — How easy it can be to portray this effectively and realistically and so enhance the farewell scene of Romeo and Juliet.

**STAGE ELECTRICS**  
BUCHANAN BUILDINGS,  
24 HOLBORN, LONDON, E.C.1 Hol. 7391

WE SPECIALISE IN RECONDITIONED STAGE LIGHTING EQUIPMENT, AND CAN REDUCE YOUR INSTALLATION AND HIRE COSTS BY AS MUCH AS 40%.

SEND FOR COMPLETE CATALOGUE

## DEANE'S

### NEW PLAYS

BY

Hugh Walpole, Ronald Gow, H. F. Rubinstein, Stuart Ready, Lionel Brown, M. E. Atkinson, D. C. Salaman, F. A. Carter, Margaret Wood, A. R. Whatmore, H. Smalley, Margaret Cropper, Robert Horspool, Bernard Merivale, Edward Percy, etc.

These include Full Length plays.

All Women plays and Prize plays.

Lists and Approval copies on Application.

H. F. W. DEANE & SONS THE YEAR BOOK PRESS LTD.  
31 MUSEUM STREET, LONDON, W.C.1



By Wilfred Massey, author of "HAPPY DAYS," "SUCH THINGS HAPPEN," "GIRL IN QUESTION," "HOT WATER," "THE MASTER KEY" and "FORCED LANDING" (over 16,000 copies sold).

## "TILL FURTHER ORDERS"

A Farce in Three Acts. 1 interior scene only. 4 men; 6 women.

All excellent acting parts. Plays 2½ hours.

Another edition exhausted. 5th Edition ready.

"A superb play... Brilliant, witty comedy..."

As professionally produced. Complete with Author's own production notes.

FEE: On sliding scale, based on takings. From £1 1 0 to £4 4 0.

Acting editions:—2/2 each post free or 10 for 18/6.

Copy will be sent on approval for 5d. stamps.

Wilfred Massey, 1, Totham Lodge, London, S.W.20.

TELEPHONE - - GERRARD 4071

# J. H. SPAANS,

## 7 LISLE STREET

## LEICESTER SQUARE W.C.2

Private, Theatrical and Historical

# WIG MAKER

A large variety of Wigs always in stock for

Hire or Purchase.



## CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS



(Rate 1/6 per line. Minimum 2 lines)

### PERSONAL

**A.A.A. GUIDE TO PLAYS:** Containing synopses and full details of 1,000 plays, 1/- post free. Many successes in the National Festivals. Lists of full-length and One-Act Plays, Sacred Plays, All-Women list, and list of Plays for Schools, Scouts, Boys' Clubs—sent post free on request. **VOLUME OF 12 PLAYS FOR WOMEN; VOLUME OF 13 PLAYS FOR BOYS; VOLUME OF 12 "THRILLERS"** (mixed casts); also **VOLUME OF NEW COMEDIES AND FESTIVAL PLAYS.** Each Volume 3/6d. post free from: **PINKER'S PLAY BUREAU, 9, ARUNDEL STREET, STRAND, W.C.2.**

**AUTHORS.** Experienced agent negotiates MSS. all types, specially for book publication. Commission only; no charges. Fleet Street Literary Agency, Sentinel House, Southampton Row, London.

**FOR ADVICE** on Production, Acting, Playwriting, consult **JOHN DODSWORTH, LONDON ACTOR/PRODUCER.** 63, HAVERSTOCK HILL, N.W.3.

### PLAYS

**FIVE CHARACTERS IN SEARCH OF A CHANGE.** Simple interior scene; 3m. 4f., (all good character parts); plays 30 minutes... "This most amusing sketch is an excellent festival choice, giving plenty of scope to the actor and producer."—*Amateur Theatre.* Published copies 1/1 post free from: **James B. Pinker & Son, Talbot House, Arundel Street, Strand, W.C.2.**

**"JULIE DESTIN."** 5f., 2m. Drama of Napoleonic days, on convict island in tropics. **"THE CRYPT."** Brilliant Cup-winner. 5f., 2m. **"THE BROWN TEAPOT"** Cottage Drama for 4f. 1/1d. each. **"THREE PLAYS FOR CHILDREN."** 1/7d. By **DR. LILIANE CLOPET.** Napier Ltd., Neville Street, Cardiff.

**"MATRI-MONEY"**—Three Act Comedy by experienced author. 6m., 6f. Original plot dealing with adventures of professional bigamist. Excellent situations and characterisation. Producer available. "S," 62, Holmefield Court, Belsize Grove, N.W.3.

**NOW ready.** **"FUN ON THE FARM."** A Farical Comedy in Three Acts. 6 women, 6 men, One Setting. A roar from beginning to end. Low fees; sliding scale; copy on approval. Apply: **H. G. MacLaurin, 106, Westbourne Road, Sheffield, 10.**

**PANTOMIMES.** Ten subjects complete with parts and piano score to each, by well-known producer. Full particulars on request. Write Box 72, c/o Advert. Dept., "Drama."

**PRIZE ONE-ACT PLAYS ON APPROVAL:** All-Women and Mixed casts. Stamp for catalogue to: **International One-Act Play Theatre, 9, Wardour Street, London, W.1.**

### PLAYS—continued.

**"SECOND WEDDING"**—An unusual Modern Drama in One Act for 5 women—by Phoebe M. Rees (author of "Sanctuary and Idols"). Sent on approval. Apply: **A. W. THOMSON, 34b, Muirhead Avenue, Liverpool 13.**

**"THE EIGHTH WONDER OF WALES."** One-Act Play by Gwen Pierce. Won Comedy Trophy, Wrexham Festival. 3m., 3f., 30 mins., interior scene. Apply: **A. W. THOMSON, 34b, Muirhead Avenue, Liverpool, 13.** For Welsh version: "Wythfed Rhyfeddod Cymru," apply: **Gwen Pierce, Caerwys, near Mold, Flintshire.**

**TWO ALL-MALE "THRILLERS":** "The Man Upstairs" a sensationally eerie play for four men, with excellent acting opportunities and a magnificent surprise climax. Recently broadcast in "Grand Guignol" programme, and included in the new volume, "Mystery Melodrama, Macabre." **"THE FLASH IN THE DARK,"** a murder mystery for a cast of seven. "An ingenious thriller... its well-sustained mystery and unexpected and dramatic denouement will make it extremely popular with all-male groups." Published Copies, 1/1d. each play, from: **PINKER'S PLAY BUREAU, Talbot House, Arundel Street, Strand, W.C.2.**

**TWO PRIZE-WINNING ONE-ACT PLAYS** by Terence Bowen: **"SUNDAY TEA"**—won Original Play Award and Open Low Comedy Trophy, Blackpool Festival, 1939. **"WE DO IT FOR LOVE"**—won Open Comedy Trophy, Blackpool, 1938.

**ALL-WOMEN AND MIXED CASTS ONE-ACT PLAYS** by Philip Johnson, Martin Shepherd, Phoebe Rees, and Howard Agg. Selection sent on loan. Plays in MS. considered. Apply: **A. W. THOMSON, 34b, Muirhead Avenue, Liverpool 13.**

### TYPEWRITING

**AN EXPERT TYPIST** undertakes the typing of Plays and Authors' MSS. at strictly moderate prices. Plays 4d. per page, carbons 1d. per page. Mrs. Johnson, 115, Beaufort Mansions, Chelsea, S.W.3. Phone: Flaxman 3479.

## HIGGS RECORDING STUDIO

(BILLY HIGGS LTD.)

RECORDING OF EVERY DESCRIPTION

WRITE FOR FREE PRICE LIST

GER 5405 ★

8 & 9 CARLISLE STREET,  
SOHO, W.1

RECORDED EFFECTS LIBRARY AS  
USED BY ALL LEADING THEATRES

## "STRAY LADY"

A Farce in 3 Acts by LYDDON SURRAGE

One interior set throughout. 5 men, 6 women.

Some recent Press opinions of "Stray Lady" :-

"'Stray Lady' caused uproarious laughter." "A two-hour tonic for anyone feeling down in the dumps." "Among amateur societies... 'Stray Lady' has been a popular choice." "A sheer laughter-maker." "A really good farce." "Stray Lady" drew laugh after laugh." "A popular success, warmly received."

Sliding scale fee. Books 1s. 6d. each, 15s. 6d. a dozen, post free.

Copy on approval, 5d., from

LYDDON SURRAGE, Limmer Cottage, Felpham,  
Bognor Regis, Sussex

## Costumes

for

Balls, Pageants, Plays

(Period and Fancy)

## CARLOTTA

39, Great James Street,  
Bedford Row,  
W.C.1

HOLborn 4423

## Central School of Speech Training & Dramatic Art

(INCORPORATED)

ROYAL ALBERT HALL

KENSINGTON GORE, S.W.7.

*Recognised as an Approved Course for the Diploma in  
Dramatic Art of London University*

Patronesses:

H.R.H. PRINCESS LOUISE, DUCHESS OF ARGYLL  
H.R.H. THE DUCHESS OF KENT

President:

RT. HON. THE EARL OF LYTON, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.

Vice-President:

JOHN GIELGUD

Principal:

ELSIE FOGERTY, C.B.E., L.R.A.M.

FULL COURSE OF TRAINING FOR  
TEACHERS OF DICTION

FULL COURSE OF TRAINING FOR  
THE STAGE

UNIVERSITY EXTENSION CLASSES  
IN VOICE PRODUCTION & DICTION  
ON SATURDAY MORNINGS, FOR  
TEACHERS AND LECTURERS.

*Prospectus on application to the Registrar.*

## L. A. M. D. A.

HARRINGTON  
ROAD

THE INCPD.  
LONDON ACADEMY OF MUSIC  
(AND DRAMATIC ART)

SOUTH  
KENSINGTON

Governing Director: WILFRID FOULIS

### SCHOLARSHIPS

Those desiring to enter for the Sir John Martin Harvey Scholarship (just vacated by Derek Blomfield who during its currency played in "The Housemaster" both in London and on tour and at Malvern Festival, etc.) giving free dramatic tuition for two years to a young man age 14-17½, should apply **now** for full particulars.

There is also a Scholarship available for a man of outstanding dramatic talent, age 25 to 30. Apply **now** for particulars.

*L.A.M.D.A. receives no financial consideration for work found for its artists.*

*Established 1861. Incorporated 1915 as an Association formed for promoting Art and not involving the acquisition of gain.*

KENSINGTON 2358



# ROYNON RAIKES

95, WIGMORE STREET, LONDON, W.1

will photograph your dress rehearsal  
FREE. Why not fix an appointment to-  
day? There is *no obligation* to purchase  
copies and *no attendance fee*. All shots  
are taken with ordinary stage lighting  
without fuss or inconvenience.

★  
This offer is  
open to all  
Amateur  
Dramatic  
and Operatic  
Societies in  
the Greater  
London Area.

Phone WELbeck 1836 at once

## STAGE LIGHTING



MODEL S.3. 500-WATT SPOT

SPOTLIGHTS · FLOODS  
DIMMERS · FOOTLIGHTS  
BATTENS · CURTAINS

SEND FOR CATALOGUE

SPECIAL DISCOUNTS  
TO AMATEUR SOCIETIES

**D. WALTER & CO. LTD.,** ILLUMINATING  
ENGINEERS,  
61-63, Lant Street, London, S.E.1.

PHONE: HOP 3651







*For Your Next Period Play—*

**HIRE**  
**YOUR COSTUMES**  
*from*  
**The British Drama League**  
**COSTUME DEPARTMENT**

*Indispensable to all users of the Library*

**THE PLAYER'S  
LIBRARY  
II**

Being the first supplement to the Catalogue  
of Books in the Library of the British  
Drama League.

**Price 2/8 post free.**

**From: 9, FITZROY SQUARE, LONDON, W.1**

**THE BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE**  
**POSTAL COURSE in the**  
**ELEMENTS OF PLAY-WRITING**

*A Student who has recently completed the Course writes:*  
"I enjoyed the Course and benefited a great deal  
from it. It is excellent and I should never hesi-  
tate to recommend it."

The Complete Course consists of 12 Lessons with  
exercises and Critical Advice. Special attention to  
individual requirements. The Fee is £7 7 0  
to Members of the League.

**A SHORT COURSE**

is also available, consisting of the same material as that  
included in the Complete Course, but with fewer exercises.  
**Fee Four Guineas to Members of the League.**

*Prospectus FREE on application to*

**9, FITZROY SQUARE, LONDON,  
W.1.**

**LITTLE THEATRE, CITIZEN HOUSE, BATH,  
AND  
EVERYMAN THEATRE, HAMPSTEAD, N.W.3**

Summer Course of Dramatic Technique, Art of  
Acting and Play Production—Three sessions—each com-  
plete in itself—Little Theatre, Bath, July 28th to August 12th;  
August 25th to September 8th; Drama Cruises to Mediter-  
ranean, August 12th to 22nd. Unrivalled opportunities for  
acting and study under well-known professional producers.  
Acting parts guaranteed. Public Performances. Course  
Fee per Bath Session, Three Guineas. Residential accommo-  
dation provided at moderate terms. Approximate Fare for Cruise,  
Thirteen Guineas.

Sunday Drama Course—Everyman Theatre Hamp-  
stead, Autumn Term opens Sunday, October 8th, at 2.30 p.m.  
Course Fee 2½ Guineas.

Beautiful Play and Pageant Costumes, all periods, sizes,  
Curtains, Scenery, Properties, available on loan at inexpensive  
rates. Dramatic Library. Free Advisory Bureau.

For particulars apply Hon. Sec., Little Theatre, Citizen  
House, Bath, enclosing stamped envelope.

# **CHAS. H. FOX LTD.**

*Theatrical Costumiers & Wig Makers*

ESTABLISHED OVER 60 YEARS

**COSTUMES AND WIGS ON HIRE**  
FOR ALL OPERAS, DRAMATIC PLAYS, PAGEANTS, ETC.

*Write for Estimates to*

**184 HIGH HOLBORN, LONDON, W.C.1.**

Telegrams: Theatricals, Westcent, London.

Telephone: Holborn 9557-9.

## **BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE BOOKSHOP**

FOR QUICK SERVICE

'Phone :- EUS. 2646

PLAYS AND BOOKS SUPPLIED

AT THE SHORTEST NOTICE

9, FITZROY SQUARE, LONDON, W.1

### **The British Drama League SUMMER HOLIDAY DRAMA SCHOOLS, 1939**

*Under the Patronage of Lord Howard de Walden*

#### **BANGOR**

AUGUST 4th to AUGUST 18th

Residential School at University College : Staff will include M. MICHEL SAINT-DENIS

*Under the Patronage of Sir Archibald Flower*

#### **STRATFORD-UPON-AVON**

SEPTEMBER 1st to SEPTEMBER 11th

Residential School at the Stratford-on-Avon College of Drama, Alveston  
(by arrangement with Mr. Randle Ayrton)

*Prospectuses on application to the Schools' Organiser*

British Drama League, 9, Fitzroy Square, London, W.1

